

Unveiling Reality of the Mind: Cultural Arbitrary of Consumerism

1). Su-Jin Choi. (2012). Unveiling reality of the mind: cultural arbitrary of consumerism. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 17(4), 265–276. doi:10.1080/1364436X.2012.745392

2). A Google search returned little information about Choi. Judging from this reference article, she most likely works with New Mexico State University indirectly and her writing contributes to the *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*. Assuming it is the same person, Choi received her Ph.D from the University of Texas at Austin with her dissertation on “Flows of Information/Influence and Diversity of Content within Online Public Fora in the context of Civil Society”, around December of 2012.

3). This article mainly concerns with the unveiling of the relationship between the way we think and proliferation of consumerism, as well as a tool to help us see ourselves perpetuating it.

4). Choi first places the cultural arbitrary of consumerism in the societal context, arguing and proving that consumerism is not natural, not sustainable, and has destructive consequences. In the second part of the article, she unveils the ways we unwittingly contribute to proliferation of consumerism on a personal level, summarizing as the sense of lack of alienation that is exploited by advertisers and marketers. Finally, she introduces a new tool called embodied reflection to help us “see” ourselves perpetuating consumerism.

5). I argue that consumerism is a cultural arbitrary. Its 'structure and function ... cannot be deduced from any universal principle ... , not being linked by any sort of internal relation to "the nature of things" or any "human nature"'.

All in all, it is a sense of lack or alienation that the advertisers and marketers learned how to use for their profit by making us believe the unpleasant feeling will 'be somehow ameliorated by the satisfaction of our appetite for consumption'.

In order to 'cut the chain of habitual thought patterns and preconceptions', we need a change from an abstract and disembodied reflection, in which the one who is reflecting feels separate from the process of reflection. Instead, we need a mindful, open-ended reflection in which the one who is reflecting is embodied (body and mind come together in the reflection) and one's prepositions are open to examination.

6). In addition to offering comprehensive explanations as to why consumerism is unsustainable and how we personally contribute to the destruction, this article presents a valuable proposal to resist against consumerism, which is exactly the topic of the research.

7). Embodied reflection means the one who is reflection is included and one's propositions are open to examination.

Embodied reflection confronts ourselves and helps us build more concrete relationships with ourselves.

On Consumption, Collective Action, and Whether Art Teaches Anything

1). Ruitenberg, C. W. (2014). On Consumerism, Collective Action, and Whether Art Teaches Anything. *Educational Theory*, 64(2), 179–194. doi:10.1111/edth.12056

2). Claudia W. Ruitenberg is an Associate Professor at the University of British Columbia's Department of Educational Studies, a scholar in the Centre for Health Education Scholarship, a Faculty Associate of the UBC Institute for Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Social Justice, and a member of the Steering Committee of Critical Studies in Sexuality. Her other works include "Education, culture, and epistemological diversity: Mapping a disputed terrain", "What do philosophers of education do (and how do they do it)?", et cetera. Ruitenberg received her doctoral degree from Simon Fraser University in 2005.

3). The topics and arguments of this article encompasses the origins of consumerism, the adverse effects of consumerism on critical thinking and collective action, the concept of strangerhood, and the roles Mediumist art and other forms of art play in raising awareness of consumerism.

4). Ruitenberg starts by explaining where consumerism may have originated from, pointing to declining influence of social structures and a sense of insecurity. She then goes on to argue that consumerism has removed citizens from their obligations as members of a polity that is supposed to keep the government and society in check, resulting in increasing difficult to organize collective action. Lastly, and most importantly, she proves the pedagogical value of art through Mediumism's contribution to speeding the lessons of strangerhood, which ultimately becomes helpful to people fighting against consumerism.

5). One of the harms of consumerism is that it leads citizens to conceive of themselves first and foremost as individuals rather than as members of a polity who are tasked collectively with keeping the government in check.

We are intrinsically strangers to all that exists, including ourselves.

In thinking about the role of education in teaching about or against consumerism, the objective is not to raise the best or most authentic anticonsumerist individuals, but rather to work together politically to resist corporate intrusion into and constraint of our lives, schools, and social imaginaries.

6). This article compliments Choi's argument that consumerism is destructive and education can be a effective weapon to fight it. Additionally, the article also supplements the first the other article with inclusion of causes of consumerism, collective action, and the concept of strangerhood.

7). The declining influence of social structure and increasing awareness of vulnerability may have given rise to consumerism.

Reintroduction of arts and humanities in school and university curricula can broaden bodies of knowledge and develop critical thinking and narrative imagination skills.